1997, that are directly attributable to the exercise of powers and authorities conferred by the declaration of a national emergency with respect to UNITA are approximately $50,000, most of which represent wage and salary costs for Federal personnel. Personnel costs were largely centered in the Department of the Treasury (particularly in the Office of Foreign Assets Control, the U.S. Customs Service, the Office of the Under Secretary for Enforcement, and the Office of the General Counsel) and the Department of State (particularly the Office of Southern African Affairs).

I will continue to report periodically to the Congress on significant developments, pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1703(c).

William J. Clinton

The White House,
September 24, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 25.

Remarks on the 40th Anniversary of the Desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas

September 25, 1997

The President. Governor and Mrs. Huckabee; Mayor and Mrs. Dailey; my good friend Daisy Bates; and the families of Wylie Branton and Justice Thurgood Marshall. To the cochairs of this event, Mr. Howard, and all the faculty and staff here at Central High; to Fatima and her fellow students; to all my fellow Americans: Hillary and I are glad to be home, especially on this day. And we thank you for your welcome.

I would also be remiss if I did not say one other word, just as a citizen. You know, we just sent our daughter off to college, and for 8½ years she got a very good education in the Little Rock school district. And I want to thank you all for that.

On this beautiful, sunshiny day, so many wonderful words have already been spoken with so much conviction, I am reluctant to add to them. But I must ask you to remember once more and to ask yourselves, what does what happened here 40 years ago mean today? What does it tell us, most importantly, about our children's tomorrows?

Forty years ago, a single image first seared the heart and stirred the conscience of our Nation, so powerful most of us who saw it then recall it still. A 15-year-old girl wearing a crisp black and white dress, carrying only a notebook, surrounded by large crowds of boys and girls, men and women, soldiers and police officers, her head held high, her eyes fixed straight ahead. And she is utterly alone.

On September 4th, 1957, Elizabeth Eckford walked to this door for her first day of school, utterly alone. She was turned away by people who were afraid of change, instructed by ignorance, hating what they simply could not understand. And America saw her, haunted and taunted for the simple color of her skin, and in the image we caught a very disturbing glimpse of ourselves.

We saw not ''one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all,'' but two Americas, divided and unequal. What happened here changed the course of our country here forever. Like Independence Hall, where we first embraced the idea that God created us all equal; like Gettysburg, where Americans fought and died over whether we would remain one Nation, moving closer to the true meaning of equality; like them, Little Rock is historic ground, for surely it was here at Central High that we took another giant step closer to the idea of America.

Elizabeth Eckford, along with her eight schoolmates, were turned away on September 4th, but the Little Rock Nine did not turn back. Forty years ago today, they climbed these steps, passed through this door, and moved our Nation. And for that, we must all thank them.

Today we honor those who made it possible, their parents first—as Eleanor Roosevelt said of them, ''To give your child for a cause is even harder than to give yourself''—to honor my friend Daisy Bates and Wylie Branton and Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP, and all who guided these children; to honor President Eisenhower, Attorney General Brownell, and the men of the 101st Airborne who enforced the Constitution; to honor every student, every teacher, every minister, every Little Rock resident, black or

white, who offered a word of kindness, a glance of respect, or a hand of friendship; to honor those who gave us the opportunity to be part of this day of celebration and rededication. But most of all, we come to honor the Little Rock Nine. Most of us who have just watched these events unfold can never understand fully the sacrifice they made. Imagine, all of you, what it would be like to come to school one day and be shoved against lockers, tripped down stairways, taunted day after day by your classmates, to go all through school with no hope of going to a school play or being on a basketball team or learning in simple peace.

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

The President. Speaking of simple peace, I'd like a little of it today.

I want all these children here to look at these people. They persevered, they endured, and they prevailed. But it was at great cost to themselves. As Melba said years later in her wonderful memoir, ''Warriors Don't Cry,'' ''My friends and I paid for the integration of Little Rock Central High with our innocence.''

Folks, in 1957 I was 11 years old, living 50 miles away in Hot Springs, when the eyes of the world were fixed here. Like almost all southerners then, I never attended school with a person of another race until I went to college. But as a young boy in my grandfather's small grocery store, I learned lessons that nobody bothered to teach me in my segregated school. My grandfather had a sixth-grade education from a tiny rural school. He never made a bit of money. But in that store, in the way he treated his customers and encouraged me to play with their children, I learned America's most profound lessons: We really are all equal. We really do have the right to live in dignity. We really do have the right to be treated with respect. We do have the right to be heard.

I never knew how he and my grandmother came to those convictions, but I'll never forget how they lived them. Ironically, my grandfather died in 1957. He never lived to see America come around to his way of thinking. But I know he's smiling down today, not on his grandson but on the Little Rock Nine, who gave up their innocence so all good people could have a chance to live their dreams.

But let me tell you something else that was true about that time. Before Little Rock, for me and other white children, the struggles of black people, whether we were sympathetic or hostile to them, were mostly background music in our normal, self-absorbed lives. We were all, like you, more concerned about our friends and our lives, day-in and day-out. But then we saw what was happening in our own back yard, and we all had to deal with it. Where did we stand? What did we believe? How did we want to live? It was Little Rock that made racial equality a driving obsession in my life.

Years later, time and chance made Ernie Green my friend. Good fortune brought me to the Governor's office, where I did all I could to heal the wounds, solve the problems, open the doors so we could become the people we say we want to be.

Ten years ago, the Little Rock Nine came back to the Governor's Mansion when I was there. I wanted them to see that the power of the office that once had blocked their way now welcomed them. But like so many Americans, I can never fully repay my debt to these nine people. For, with their innocence, they purchased more freedom for me, too, and for all white people. People like Hazel Brown Massery, the angry taunter of Elizabeth Eckford, who stood with her in front of this school this week as a reconciled friend. And with the gift of their innocence, they taught us that all too often what ought to be can never be for free.

Forty years later, what do you young people in this audience believe we have learned? Well, 40 years later, we know that we all benefit—all of us—when we learn together, work together, and come together. That is, after all, what it means to be an American.

Forty years later, we know, not withstanding some cynics, that all our children can learn, and this school proves it. Forty years later, we know when the constitutional rights of our citizens are threatened, the National Government must guarantee them. Talk is fine, but when they are threatened, you need strong laws faithfully enforced and upheld by independent courts.

Forty years later, we know there are still more doors to be opened, doors to be opened wider, doors we have to keep from being shut again now. Forty years later, we know freedom and equality cannot be realized without responsibility for self, family, and the duties of citizenship, or without a commitment to building a community of shared destiny and a genuine sense of belonging.

Forty years later, we know the question of race is more complex and more important than ever, embracing no longer just blacks and whites or blacks and whites and Hispanics and Native Americans, but now people from all parts of the Earth coming here to redeem the promise of America.

Forty years later, frankly, we know we're bound to come back where we started. After all the weary years and silent tears, after all the stony roads and bitter rides, the question of race is, in the end, still an affair of the heart.

But if these are our lessons, what do we have to do? First, we must all reconcile. Then we must all face the facts of today. And finally we must act. Reconciliation is important not only for those who practice bigotry, but for those whose resentment of it lingers, for both are prisons from which our spirits must escape.

If Nelson Mandela, who paid for the freedom of his people with 27 of the best years of his life, could invite his jailers to his inauguration and ask even the victims of violence to forgive their oppressors, then each of us can seek and give forgiveness.

And what are the facts? It is a fact, my fellow Americans, that there are still too many places where opportunity for education and work are not equal, where disintegration of family and neighborhood make it more difficult. But it is also a fact that schools and neighborhoods and lives can be turned around if, but only if, we are prepared to do what it takes.

It is a fact that there are still too many places where our children die or give up before they bloom, where they are trapped in a web of crime and violence and drugs. But we know this too can be changed but only if we are prepared to do what it takes.

Today children of every race walk through the same door, but then they often walk down different halls. Not only in this school but across America, they sit in different classrooms. They eat at different tables. They even sit in different parts of the bleachers at the football game. Far too many communities are all white, all black, all Latino, all Asian. Indeed, too many Americans of all races have actually begun to give up on the idea of integration and the search for common ground. For the first time since the 1950's, our schools in America are resegregating. The rollback of affirmative action is slamming shut the doors of higher education on a new generation, while those who oppose it have not yet put forward any other alternative.

In so many ways, we still hold ourselves back. We retreat into the comfortable enclaves of ethnic isolation. We just don't deal with people who are different from us. Segregation is no longer the law, but too often separation is still the rule. And we cannot forget one stubborn fact that has not yet been said as clearly as it should: There is still discrimination in America.

There are still people who can't get over it, who can't let it go, who can't go through the day unless they have somebody else to look down on. And it manifests itself in our streets and in our neighborhoods and in the workplace and in the schools. And it is wrong. And we have to keep working on it, not just with our voices but with our laws. And we have to engage each other in it.

Of course, we should celebrate our diversity. The marvelous blend of cultures and beliefs and races has always enriched America, and it is our meal ticket to the 21st century. But we also have to remember with the painful lessons of the civil wars and the ethnic cleansing around the world, that any nation that indulges itself in destructive separatism will not be able to meet and master the challenges of the 21st century.

We have to decide—all you young people have to decide—will we stand as a shining example or a stunning rebuke to the world of tomorrow? For the alternative to integration is not isolation or a new separate but equal, it is disintegration.

Only the American idea is strong enough to hold us together. We believe, whether our ancestors came here in slave ships or on the

Mayflower, whether they came through the portals of Ellis Island or on a plane to San Francisco, whether they have been here for thousands of years, we believe that every individual possesses the spark of possibility, born with an equal right to strive and work and rise as far as they can go, and born with an equal responsibility to act in a way that obeys the law, reflects our values and passes them on to their children. We are white and black, Asian and Hispanic, Christian and Jew and Muslim, Italian- and Vietnamese- and Polish-Americans and goodness knows how many more today. But above all, we are still Americans. Martin Luther King said, ''We are woven into a seamless garment of destiny. We must be one America.''

The Little Rock Nine taught us that. We cannot have one America for free, not 40 years ago, not today. We have to act. All of us have to act. Each of us has to do something. Especially our young people must seek out people who are different from themselves and speak freely and frankly to discover they share the same dreams. All of us should embrace the vision of a colorblind society but recognize the fact that we are not there yet, and we cannot slam shut the doors of educational and economic opportunity.

All of us should embrace ethnic pride, and we should revere religious conviction, but we must reject separation and isolation. All of us should value and practice personal responsibility for ourselves and our families. And all Americans, especially our young people, should give something back to their community through citizen service. All Americans of all races must insist on both equal opportunity and excellence in education. That is even more important today than it was for these nine people, and look how far they took themselves with their education.

The true battleground in education today is whether we honestly believe that every child can learn, and we have the courage to set high academic standards we expect all our children to meet. We must not replace the tyranny of segregation with the tragedy of low expectations. I will not rob a single American child of his or her future. It is wrong.

My fellow Americans, we must be concerned not so much with the sins of our parents as with the success of our children, how they will live, and live together, in years to come. If those nine children could walk up those steps 40 years ago, all alone, if their parents could send them into the storm armed only with school books and the righteousness of their cause, then surely together we can build one America, an America that makes sure no future generation of our children will have to pay for our mistakes with the loss of their innocence.

At this schoolhouse door today, let us rejoice in the long way we have come these 40 years. Let us resolve to stand on the shoulders of the Little Rock Nine and press on with confidence in the hard and noble work ahead. ''Let us lift every voice and sing, till Earth and Heaven ring,'' one America today, one America tomorrow, one America forever.

God bless the Little Rock Nine, and God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. on the front steps of Central High School. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas and his wife, Janet; Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock and his wife, Patti; Daisy Bates, NAACP attorney in 1957; and Rudolph Howard, current principal, and Fatima McKendra, current student body president, Central High School.

Remarks at the Reception for the Congressional Medal of Honor Society in Little Rock

September 25, 1997

Thank you very much. Secretary Gober, President Bucha, Mayor Dailey, Mayor Hays, Senator Beebe. Governor McMath, it's wonderful to see you here tonight, sir.

I thank Secretary Gober for his introduction. It was overly generous but a good illustration of Clinton's first law of politics: Whenever possible, try to have yourself introduced by someone you have appointed to high office. [*Laughter*] Did you hear the story Secretary Gober said about he was in the Army, then he was in the Marine Corps, and his wife was in the Navy and then the Air Force. They're the only people I ever knew who organized a 30-year campaign to